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**Clark County  
Historic Preservation Commission  
Staff Report**

**Project Number:** PRJ-167748/LUP-81999  
**Project Name:** Vancouver City Cemetery South Fence Replacement  
**Project Address:** 2700 E Mill Plain Boulevard  
**Applicant/Owner:** City of Vancouver  
**Staff:** Mark Person, AICP, Senior Planner  
**Meeting Date:** February 2, 2022

**I. Summary**

The Vancouver City Cemetery is located at 2700 E Mill Plain Boulevard (Tax Assessor's Parcel 35180000). Vancouver Public Works have applied for a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace the fence at the southern end of the site, along E Mill Plain Boulevard.

**II. Clark County Heritage Register and National Register of Historic Places Status**

The Vancouver City Cemetery was added to the Clark County Heritage Register in 2020.

**III. Board Responsibility**

Under the City of Vancouver Ordinance M-3243 (VMC Chapter 17.39), the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission has the responsibility for reviewing matters of historic preservation within the City of Vancouver.

Per 17.39.080:

A. Review Required. No person shall construct any new building or structure, or reconstruct, alter, restore, remodel, repair, move, demolish or make any material change affecting significant historic features as listed in the designation application to any existing property on the CCHR or within a historic district on the CCHR, whether the property is contributing or noncontributing, without review by the commission and without receipt of a certificate of appropriateness or, in the case of demolition, a waiver of certificate of appropriateness, as a result of the review.

#### IV. Physical Description

Vancouver Old City Cemetery has played a part in local history since the days of Fort Vancouver and the Hudson's Bay Company. For decades, it served as the primary municipal cemetery for the City of Vancouver and was the first cemetery to have a dedicated Masonic section. A number of historically prominent figures such as Lowell Hidden, Charles and Laura Slocum, and Esther Short are laid to rest at this site.

The site includes an iron gate and fencing on the south side of the site, fronting Mill Plain Boulevard. The nomination includes extensive research on the history of the gate. In addition to the gate, there are a number of heritage trees on the site.

For a full description of the site and nomination information, see Exhibit 4.

#### V. Staff Review and Comment

The design review criteria are listed in the adopted rules and procedures of the Clark County Historic Preservation Commission (April 8, 2008). The standard used is that of the Secretary of the Interior.

The existing wrought iron fence along the southern property line has been damaged by car collisions and wear. A two-rail ornamental steel fence has been selected to match the look of the existing fence. The existing fence is 42 inches in height and the proposed fence is 42 inches in height. The existing gates will be repaired wherever feasible as outlined in the applicant narrative.

*1. Every reasonable effort shall be made to provide a compatible use for a property which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure or site and its environment, or to use a property for its originally intended purposes.*

**Finding:** The proposal to replace the fence at the southern end of the site is compatible with the cemetery use of the historic property.

*2. The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.*

**Finding:** The existing fence along the south property line is a distinguishing character of the site but is in disrepair and needs to be replaced. The replacement fence will be similar to the existing fence.

*3. All buildings, structures and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be recognized and respected.*

**Finding:** The replacement fence will be similar to the existing fence but will not seek to create an earlier appearance or historical nature.

*4. Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and this significance shall be recognized and respected.*

**Finding:** The existing wrought iron fence is not original to the site; the nomination indicates that the southern fence was authorized in 1913 by Vancouver City Council and painted in 1914. As shown on the attached pictures, the fence has been damaged by automobiles over the years. A similar style and color of fence has been chosen for the replacement.

5. *Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, or site shall be treated with sensitivity.*

**Finding:** The existing gates along the Mill Plain Boulevard fence will be repaired where feasible. The gates include distinctive features and are highlighted in the nomination.

6. *Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced whenever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications or features, substantiated by historic, physical or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.*

**Finding:** Repair of the fence on the southern property line is not feasible. The replacement fence is similar to the existing fence in design, color and composition.

7. *The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.*

**Finding:** The existing gates will be cleaned, repaired and painted to match the new fence. No sandblasting is proposed.

8. *Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archaeological resources affected by, or adjacent to any project.*

**Finding:** To staff's knowledge, the proposal should not affect any archaeological resources. If an inadvertent discovery is found, it is recommended that work cease and the applicant contact the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation for guidance.

9. *Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, materials, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.*

**Finding:** Staff finds that the proposed replacement fence does not destroy any historical, architectural, or cultural materials of the property. The new fence is compatible with the size, color, materials, and character of the property.

10. *Wherever possible, new additions or alterations to structures shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the structure would be unimpaired.*

**Finding:** No additions or alterations to structures are proposed as part of the fence replacement.

## **VI. Staff Conclusions and Recommendations**

Staff finds that the proposal meets the applicable criteria as stated above. Staff recommends the commission approve the certificate of appropriateness application for the proposed fence replacement as submitted.

## **VII. Appeal**

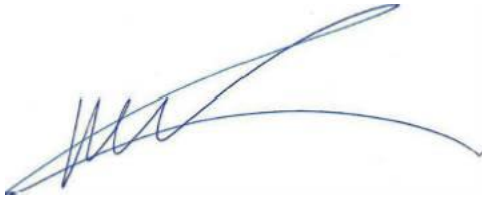
The commission's decision regarding the proposed certificate of appropriateness may be appealed to the City Council. Appeal of the City Council's decision may be appealed to superior court. The letter of appeal shall state the case number designated by the city and the name of the applicant, name and signature of each petitioner and a statement showing that each petitioner is entitled to file the appeal under VMC Chapter 20, and the specific aspect(s) of the decision and reasons why each aspect is in error as a matter of fact or law, and the evidence relied upon to prove the error.

A fee of \$2,034.00 must accompany the appeal. However, if the aggrieved party is a recognized neighborhood association, the fee assessed is \$154.00. During the current COVID-19 crisis, the appeal request shall be emailed to [eplans@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:plans@cityofvancouver.us) as well as to the case manager's e-mail address below and the appeal fee electronically paid to the City of Vancouver.

For more information on the appeal process, please refer to Vancouver Municipal Code 20.210.130 or contact the Community and Economic Development Department, Land Use Team at [cddplanning@cityofvancouver.us](mailto:cddplanning@cityofvancouver.us).

## **VIII. Exhibits**

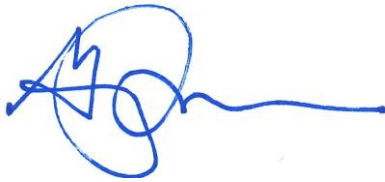
1. Application
2. Vicinity Map
3. Narrative
4. CCHR Nomination
5. Replacement fence specifications
6. Car Damage West End
7. East Gate
8. West Gate
9. Central Gate
10. Fence Line looking East



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**Report Prepared by**

January 19, 2022  
**Date**



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**Greg Turner, Manager  
Land Use Team**

January 19, 2022  
**Date**